

SPORTSMEN'S GROUPS

Urge Bill to Transfer Arsenal Area to State

Plans for a concerted drive to "save the DesPlaines wildlife area" were announced today in the monthly newsletter of the Will County Sportsmen's club. Affiliated with the Illinois Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, the Will county group has 15 member chapters.

Floyd Zebell, editor of the newsletter, writes: "We are asking each person who gets this newsletter to obtain as many signatures as you can, and return the petitions by Jan. 31."

Zebell, who lives at 409 Hamilton St., Wilmington, said that the goal of the campaign is to obtain 100,000 signatures.

The petitions are headed with this statement, directed to Sens. Paul Douglas and Everett M. Dirksen of Illinois:

"We, the undersigned, request that you or one of your colleagues in the Senate introduce a bill at the earliest possible moment in the 86th Congress to convey to the Illinois Department of Conservation, for conservation purposes, 2,600 acres more or less of real property comprising the DesPlaines Wildlife area, located in Will county, Illinois, now owned by the federal government and declared surplus by the U. S. Army."

The wildlife area has a three-mile frontage along the

Illinois waterway about 11 miles southwest of Joliet.

Noting that 100,000 names on a petition, would represent enough votes to swing the state of Illinois in a close election, the newsletter says: "The time has come for conservationists in Illinois to make a show of strength. We didn't make this a political issue, they did. A bill in Congress will temporarily block the sale of the property, and pressure will build up higher and higher and the bureaucrats may change their minds."

The newsletter also refers to "misstatements" that have appeared in the press, apparently referring to a letter sent out by the Association of Commerce, and published in part in The Herald-News, emphasizing the value of the land for development as an industrial site and noting that the Santa Fe railroad has made a flat offer to buy all

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Urge Arsenal Land Control to State

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the land at a price of \$500 an acre.

The sportsmen's publication quotes a recent letter from Lawson B. Knott Jr. of the General Services administration, which said, "We have decided to offer for public sale the entire surplus area, including the land being used by the state for wildlife conservation." The newsletter editor says, "This means that nothing is being left for conservation. If the state wants the property, it will have to bid higher than industry."

The letter to sportsmen cites a report submitted by the State Department of Conservation to the GSA concerning use of the wildlife area over the period from 1948 to 1958. This states that in the period "some 55,000 hunters took 75,000 pheasants and 5,000 rabbits. Since 1953, some 100 field trials have been held, involving about 10,000 dogs and handlers. A total of 25,

000 pheasant chicks were processed each year. Wild turkeys, mallard ducks, wood ducks, pintail ducks and black ducks have been reared there and released."

"A great deal more has been done and about \$500,000 has been expended on the area. The Department of Conservation deserves a big hand for a job well done on this land. Just think what could have been done if the state owned it."

Those who advocate sale of the property for industrial development, a move officially favored by the Will County Board of Supervisors, have contended that the property would thus be returned to the county's tax rolls and that future industrial expansion there could involve a capital investment of 200 million dollars and additional employment for 6,000 or more persons in the vicinity of Joliet.

Officers of the Will County Sportsmen's club are: Stanley Ekedahl, New Lenox, president; George Raguse, Peotone, vice president; Herman Christiansen, Manhattan, treasurer, and Zebell, secretary.

Member chapters are Channahon, Beecher, Braidwood, Crete, Elwood, Pure Oil Rod and Gun club, Frankfort, Troy Sportsmen, Lockport, Manhattan, New Lenox, Peotone, Sauk Trail and Wesley.